

### Strengthening Imagination

There is one most important aspect in all theatre. Without it an actor is nothing. Without it a production is void. It is the vital spirit that gives drama its life. It is imagination.

Imagination, observation, concentration, and sense recall are all integrally related and function together in the imaginative process.

The actor's purpose, as well as the purpose of the theatre, is to create and illusion of reality. Plays are not real life; they only appear real. They give us a heightened interpretation, rather than an actual reproduction of life.

In fact, the only reality that exists in the theatre is an aesthetic or artistic reality, created by the imagination of actor and audience. The actor knows that he is not really the character in the play, but through his imagination he acts as if he were the character. The audience knows that the hero is not really dying on stage, that tomorrow night and as long as the play runs he will die each performance, yet through its imagination the audience is able to believe in the characters and situations. Let us repeat: to participate in the illusion of reality, both actor and audience must "suspend disbelief" and let their imaginations flow freely.

The importance of imagination rests in its ability to revitalize your acting. Its greatest service is to bring to your mind detailed pictures from which you can create a unique and yet appropriate character in the play. The pictures you visualize spring from your insight and your past life experiences. If your imagination is vivid, the pictures will stimulate you into acting, believing and feeling your part.

As a child you probably exercised your imagination often, but as you matured you might have grown lazy in using it. It is for this reason that you must work on imagination as much as possible. The following experiences should help focus some of your creative imagination.

#### What Is It?

1. Everyone sits with pen and paper.
2. The instructor has preselected 10 different objects from around the home and school.
3. As each object is shown to the class, students are to jot down what the object is - and what it might be used for - outside of its normal function.
4. Students may physically handle each object and pass it about the room. Tag each object in the manner of courtroom evidence so as to simplify the identity of objects at the end of the exercise.



### "And Now You're Holding a . . ."

1. Students sit in a circle with the instructor.
2. Take an object from the classroom, e.g. a book. Start to pass the book around the circle. Explain that as the book begins to move about the circle it will become different things. Students must react accordingly and handle the object as if it were that actual item.
3. ITEM LIST: a baby, a dirty kleenex, a hot potato, a tarantula, a sharp knife, a kitten, a dismembered head, a valuable antique vase, a rubber ball, a teddy bear, a crumbling old letter, a steel pipe.

### A Picture's Worth a 1000 Words

Imagine the reasons behind unexplained scenes. Moments you happen upon while flicking through television channels, flipping through magazine pages, passing frozen tableaux in airports or shopping malls. What if you could take a moment to explain the moment in your own imaginative words?

1. Sitting in a circle or at your desks observe 5 different moments from a series of overheads prepared for you.
2. You will be permitted to view each overhead for one minute. In your Theatre Arts Duotangs jot down the title and a one sentence imaginative sketch of what is going on in your opinion.
3. At the end of the display go back and work on the one that made the greatest impression upon your imagination. Write between the lines. What happened to lead up to this moment? What is it that we are actually seeing? What is the final outcome?
4. (1) The Conservationist  
(2) Lethal Beauty  
(3) The Kiss at City Hall  
(4) Self-Portrait  
(5) The Child, The Future
5. Write a final copy of your Imaginative Impression and hand it in.

### Imagination Production Piece

1. Here is your chance to let your imagination flow freely. You and two other classmates, working as a team, are to improvise a 5 minute scene around three unrelated words. As soon as you select the group of words, set your imagination to work and incorporate the words as an integral part of a fantastic scene that your group can play. Your combined imaginations should enable you to visualize the scene structure and the details. As you improvise, your imagination will help supply the dialogue and action.
2. You will be graded on how uniquely you work the words into a scene and how far-fetched the situation is. You will be graded on your concentration in maintaining character and developing the scene.

Your group will be allowed one class period to plan and rehearse the scene. Using your combined imaginations, create a strange situation in which the three words play an integral part as important objects. Be sure that the association of the articles is fantastic and that your story contains much action (movement). Plan the basic sequence of action, arranging the scene for completion within 4 - 5 minutes. You may play yourself in the situation, or you may assume a different person. Either way, be sure you "stay in character" by concentrating on what that person would say and do in that particular situation.

3. Outline the improvisation, using the form provided. Be sure that each of your team knows the sequence of the planned story. Also decide which of you will announce the scene in class.
4. Quietly rehearse your scene, using your imaginations to add sparkle to the action and dialogue. Don't memorize specific movement and words. The rehearsal is only to attune you to playing together as an ensemble.
5. When your team is called upon to perform hand your Activity Sheet to the instructor and go to the playing area. Arrange what materials you need. Write the 3 words on the board for the class.
6. Improvise your scene. Stay within the 4 - 5 minute time limit. The time keeper will signal your group by standing up at 4 minutes and sitting down at 5.



**Imagination Production Piece**  
**Activity Sheet**

On this sheet construct a neat, complete sentence outline of your improvised scene situation. Provide one copy to the instructor.

**GROUP MEMBERS** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Explain what your group feels is the purpose of this assignment.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List your 3 unrelated words to be used: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What is your General Setting?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe each of your characters.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Outline, step-by-step, the situation of your improvisation.

**Introduction** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Body** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Conclusion** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Imagination Production Piece**  
**- Instructor's Critique -**

1. Team created a unique and active scene from the word association.

no attempt - weak - satisfactory - successful - powerful

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Maintained concentration staying within character and situation.

no attempt - weak - satisfactory - successful - powerful

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Success of scene development.

no attempt - weak - satisfactory - successful - powerful

4. General evidence of imagination (1 being weakest and 10 strongest).

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

Additional Comments and Suggestions \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

**FINAL EVALUATION** \_\_\_\_\_